

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Sanford Bishop voted to improve access to affordable medicines by voting for legislation which requires the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries.

The House passed the bill this afternoon by a vote of 255 to 170.

“Of late, drug costs have been rising faster than the rate of inflation. This phenomenon places a heavy burden on those in lower-income brackets, many of whom are senior citizens and on Medicare,” stated Congressman Bishop. “This legislation aims to allow our seniors to more easily afford groceries, housing and other necessities, rather than sacrifice a large portion of their income for artificially-expensive prescription medication.”

“Previous laws concerning prescription drugs prohibited the Department of Health and Human Services from negotiating for lower drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries,” he continued.

“Meanwhile, the Veterans Administration has been able to use its buying power to negotiate low drug prices for veterans for years. This bill passed today repeals the prohibitive provisions on HHS, giving them the same buying power enjoyed by the Veteran’s Administration.”

This bill also gives Medicare discretion on how to best implement the negotiating authority and in supplying Medicare beneficiaries with low-cost drugs.

The bill is supported by many organizations, including AARP, National Community Pharmacists Association, Association of Community Pharmacists, and Families USA.